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MERCY HOSPITAL ANDERSON SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN NATIONAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVE

*Nurses from Mercy Hospital Anderson will develop innovations
to improve quality of care*

Program is part of effort to align local forces for improved health care quality

Cincinnati – Cincinnati Aligning Forces for Quality announced today that Mercy Hospital Anderson has been selected by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) to participate in a new effort to improve the quality of care in hospitals. The program will help nurses and other frontline staff identify, test and implement changes that will improve the quality and safety of patient care in their medical and surgical units.

The program is part of RWJF's *Aligning Forces for Quality* (AF4Q) initiative, a cornerstone of the Foundation's \$300 million commitment to improving quality in specific regions across the United States. Cincinnati Aligning Forces for Quality, an initiative of the Health Improvement Collaborative, coordinates local efforts for the program. Greater Cincinnati was selected last year as one of 14 AF4Q communities nationwide.

The new nurse-led program is based on successful pilot efforts by the Foundation to transform care at the bedside, by making hospital staff who spend the most time directly caring for patients the key drivers of quality improvement. Hospitals that have already participated in the program report a cultural shift on their medical-surgical units that has produced better clinical outcomes, more time spent with patients by staff, and lower turnover of nursing jobs.

"We know that the quality of health care can be improved in every community in the nation, and the more people who get involved, the more likely we are to succeed," said Craig Brammer, director of Cincinnati Aligning Forces for Quality. "Having local hospital leaders involved in our efforts is an important part of our strategy to improving quality of care. Not only will they learn new ways to improve care in our community, but they will be sharing what works in our community with other hospitals around the nation that can learn from our insights."

Experts say the effort to transform care at the bedside is unusual in its focus on engaging nurses and other frontline staff to develop and lead the quality improvement efforts. Ideas for improving care come not from the hospital's executives, but from the nurses who treat patients every day. Nurse-led teams identify where change is needed on their unit, suggest and test potential solutions, and decide whether and how those innovations should be implemented.

“Providing the highest quality care has always been our priority at Mercy Hospital Anderson, and this program will help us create a new roadmap for providing care that is safe, reliable, and patient-centered,” said Patricia A. Schroer, president & CEO of Mercy Hospital Anderson. “We’re delighted to have the opportunity to learn from others as well as share our knowledge and experience nationwide.”

“Because they spend so much of their day with patients and their families, our nurses are in unique positions to know exactly where – and how – quality can be improved” said Schroer. “At Mercy, nothing is more important than high-quality care and I’m glad our hospital was chosen to be part of this effort.”

“We congratulate Mercy Anderson and look forward to helping spread their learnings to hospitals across Greater Cincinnati,” said Greater Cincinnati Health Council President Colleen O’Toole, PhD. The Health Council will be assisting AF4Q in helping to involve front-line nurses in quality improvement. “This is good for hospitals as they work to make care better, but more importantly, it’s good for patients,” she said.

Led by RWJF, the TCAB Collaborative will be overseen by The Center for Health Care Quality at The George Washington University Medical Center School of Public Health and Health Services, which serves as the national program office for the Aligning Forces for Quality initiative. Technical assistance will be provided by the American Organization of Nurse Executives. The Institute for Healthcare Improvement will convene training workshops for participants. The first cohort will kick-off this month and the second cohort launches fall of 2009.

In every region involved in the Aligning Forces for Quality initiative including Greater Cincinnati, broad-based teams of people who get care, give care, and pay for care are working together to improve health care quality. By aligning people from across the community in different AF4Q initiatives, Cincinnati Aligning Forces for Quality hopes to help achieve community-wide transformation of health care.

For more information, visit www.the-collaborative.org or www.rwjf.org.

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The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focuses on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to improving the health and health care of all Americans, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, meaningful and timely change. For more than 35 years the Foundation has brought experience, commitment, and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those it serves. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the Foundation expects to make a difference in your lifetime. For more information, visit www.rwjf.org.

*Cincinnati Aligning Forces for Quality is an initiative of the **Health Improvement Collaborative of Greater Cincinnati**. Formed in 1992, the Collaborative is a nonprofit organization that utilizes distinctive, innovative approaches to create a healthier community. The organization brings diverse community stakeholders together in a neutral forum to generate measurable, sustainable health improvement initiatives. For more information call 513-531-0267 or visit our Web site at www.the-collaborative.org*